

CIA UNDER FIRE

Protesters prepare to descend on Washington

By Gary Thatcher

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Washington
Henry David Thoreau will be in the nation's capital this weekend, at least in spirit.

The name of the author of "On Civil Disobedience" undoubtedly will be invoked by some of the issuers of a press release promoting the "first-ever civil disobedience" at the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Tomorrow demonstrators from across the United States are expected to converge on Washington for a three-day protest called "The National Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa."

Simultaneous protests in San Francisco also are planned.

Ned Greenberg, a spokesman for the Washington organizers, says "we're expecting more than 100,000 people" to attend a Saturday rally on the Ellipse, near the White House, and then march to the Capitol. The purpose, he says, is to protest US policies in Central America and southern Africa.

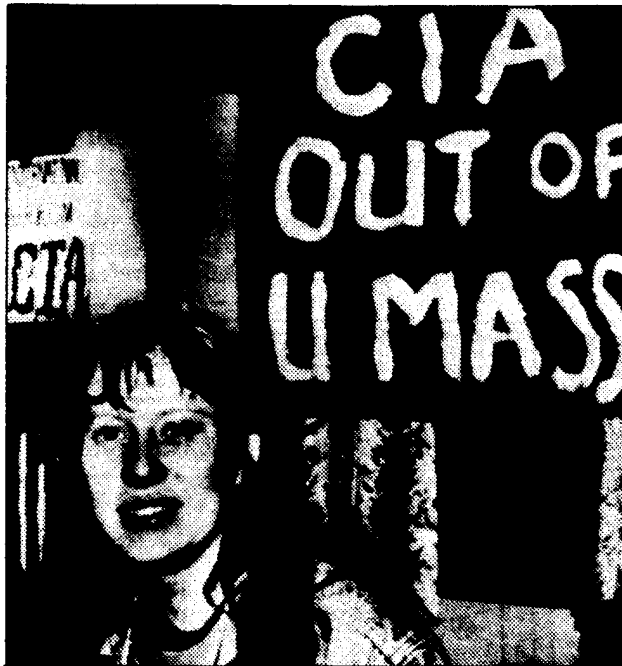
An interfaith worship service for the demonstrators is scheduled for Sunday.

Then on Monday some 500 protesters are expected at a rally at the gates of the CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. The purpose, according to demonstration organizers, is to protest CIA support for the contra fighters attempting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Organizers say the protesters will not comply with restrictions placed on them by local police, and may try to block the two vehicle entrances to the wooded Virginia complex. Arrests are possible.

The CIA, in an unusual move, issued a public statement, saying: "Agency employees are working around the world, often risking their lives, to protect the freedoms that all Americans enjoy, in-

cluding the freedom of speech. We therefore respect the right of the demonstrators to express their views at the agency in a lawful, peaceful manner."

Protest organizers say the planned demonstration at CIA headquarters was given a boost by last week's acquittal, in a Massachusetts courtroom, of protesters who tried to prevent CIA recruitment at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



Amy Carter was acquitted of anti-CIA-protest charges

Among the defendants were Amy Carter, the daughter of former President Jimmy Carter, and Abbie Hoffman, a veteran of the 1960s protest movement.

But Mr. Greenberg and others involved in planning the event resist comparisons between these demonstrations and the mass protests of the '60s.

"The '60's had this huge mobilization. But we're making inroads that were never made in the '60s," Greenberg says. "It's not a resurgence. It's something much more powerful. . . . What we're seeing is the emergence of a new political

force."

This "political force," according to some of the activists participating in this weekend's events, is rooted in opposition to US involvement in Central America and US support for the white minority government in South Africa.

"Basically, there's a lot of concern about what's happening down in Central America. There's a lot of concern for the victims," says Karen Edwards, a volunteer worker for Clergy and Laity Concerned, an Atlanta group.

Ms. Edwards will be coming to Washington in a rental truck, carrying donated clothing and educational and medical supplies destined for Nicaragua.

Her vehicle is part of a caravan of some 40 trucks, from various parts of the US, converging on Washington with goods bound for Nicaragua. Called the "Quest for Peace," the caravan is one project of the Quixote Center, a Maryland religious organization that is trying to match, in humanitarian aid, the amount of money that Congress votes for the contras.

"A lot of people want to change US policy in Central America. This is a concrete way of demonstrating an alternative policy to our government's support for the contras," Ms. Edwards says.

"Hopefully, next time around when Congress votes they'll think differently about voting aid [to the contras]," she adds.

"It's not enough to say things to your congressman," says 23-year-old Robert Taylor, who plans to travel to Washington from Dayton, Ohio, for the protest.

He says the event will provide an opportunity for grass-roots activists from across the US to compare notes and map out strategies. "A youth perspective is needed," he adds, because "it's young people that are going to have to go down there [to Central America] and fight, if tensions are heightened."

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